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Kamehameha II's Ill-starred Journey to England Aboard *L'Aigle*, 1823–1824

"The King was going to England with us."

John Rose, "Log *L'Aigle* Whaler, 1822–1824,"
11 November 1823, National Maritime Museum,
United Kingdom

IN 1817, BRITISH PARTNERS Almon and James Hill and John Boulcott bought a French merchant ship captured as a prize and refitted it to ply the South Seas whaling trade. *L'Aigle* ("The Eagle"), a three-masted, square stern ship without a gallery, had two decks and displayed a woman's bust as her masthead. The ship had been built as a workhorse: she measured 114-1/2 feet long, 30-1/2 feet wide, had a draft of 5-1/2 feet, and weighed 475 tons. *L'Aigle* sailed July 12, 1817 from the English Channel port of Deal on her first whaling voyage to the South Seas, returning January 4, 1819. The Hills and Boulcott now had five ships in the South Seas fishery trade.¹

An American from a Nantucket whaling family signed on as captain for *L'Aigle*'s second voyage in 1819. Valentine Starbuck returned

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the whaler to Gravesend on July 26, 1821 with a full cargo after a successful voyage of 28 months, including stops at the Sandwich Islands. After her return, the owners spent six months refitting *L'Aigle* from top to bottom and enlarging her cargo capacity by twenty extra tons.² Ready for her third voyage by late December 1821, *L'Aigle's* owners expected that Captain Starbuck would proceed around Cape Horn, procure a cargo of whale oil from the South Seas fishery grounds in as short a time as possible, and then bring that cargo home with all reasonable dispatch. For his efforts, Starbuck would receive 12 percent on the net proceeds of the cargo.³

Half a world away from Honolulu Harbor in London, England, on the first Saturday in January 1822, the steam boat *Hero* took *L'Aigle* in tow out of her owner's Limehouse repair docks. Several hours later, as *L'Aigle* lay at anchor on the first night of her new journey, crew members began final preparations for the long whaling voyage ahead. That first night, January 5, a young member of the ship's company named John Rose began work on the private journal that he would keep detailing *L'Aigle's* more than two-year voyage.⁴ By January 10, *L'Aigle* lay at anchor in the Downs off Deal where Captain Valentine Starbuck (now 30 years old and newly married⁵) took command. *L'Aigle* lingered at Deal until January 13, awaiting an easterly wind to carry it out into the English Channel headed for the South Seas whaling grounds.⁶

Neither her owners, nor the crew, nor Valentine Starbuck himself could foretell the significant role in Sandwich Islands' history that *L'Aigle* and her crew would play before she once again reached England more than two years later. Even Kamehameha II could not have foretold that in 1823 he would choose *L'Aigle* to carry him, Queen Kamamalu, and his royal suite to England to secure King George's protection for his kingdom and rule. This article publishes new details about the plans for the journey and the journey itself that enlarge the historian's understanding of the King of the Sandwich Islands' momentous voyage to England in 1823–1824 and the actions of those who traveled with him. Three primary sources provide these new details: John Rose's 1822–1824 log, two July 1824 articles from London's *Literary Gazette*, and a July 1825 newspaper account from the London *Times* reporting on Hill and Boulcott's lawsuit against Starbuck.⁷

Remarks on board the *Le Tigre* Southern Whaler
 of Starbuck Commanded from London round Cape Horn
 in 1822. Kept by J. Rose.

1822
 Saturday 2^d At 9 AM hauled out of the Bay, Canal and
 was taken in tow by the Stern Steam Boat and in 3^o
 hours came to anchor off Graciosa. But the Pilot
 there and another came aboard. Copied the map of
 Graciosa and got out the Sound and Spinnaker and done the
 necessary etc. At 6 PM at the Coast 3 Boats in view

Sunday 3^d Fine pleasant weather. The wind from the N.W.
 at 11 AM got over the Starboard lower Anchor set up the
 chain trappery and Backeting fou & aft at 3 PM
 the Pinak along towed by a Stern Boat passed us
 and chased us which we returned.

Monday 4th Fine pleasant weather with light winds from the
 Northward. People employed making preparations for
 Sea. At 11 AM Mr. Hill (the Gunner) Capt. Clark
 and Capt. & Mrs. Starbuck came on board. Got
 under weigh and dropped lower down but in falling
 got the Anchor and bringing her up too short we
 broke the Shank of Anchor we then let go the
 Starboard Anchor. People employed with black gelling
 over the spare Anchor in the waist and bending the
 chain sent a Boat to look for the Stem of the
 broken Anchor and found that it had been pick'd
 up by a waterman sent to Graciosa to repair
 the Bower of the top of the Anchor.

Tuesday 5th Began with fine pleasant weather the wind from
 the N. Eastward. People employed in surveying
 etc. At 3 PM the Capt. & Capt. Starbuck went
 ashore & at 6 o the Boat returned better than
 cloudy weather. Received on board the Pass of

The first page of John Rose's journal. Photograph courtesy of Charles Payton, Somerset, England, owner of the journal. Mr. Payton asserts copyright privileges and granted the author permission to use his photographs of portions of Rose's journal solely to accompany this article.

AN UNLIKELY ALLY

In addition to the regular crew complement, the whaler carried two Sandwich Islanders who had made the journey to London on *L'Aigle's* last voyage. The owners wanted them returned to their islands, and by July 21, 1822, the two unnamed natives had made it home to Honolulu Harbor and were discharged. Several other merchant ships and whalers lay at anchor when *L'Aigle* arrived at Honolulu that day, as well as several brigs and schooners belonging to Kamehameha II (who preferred to use his abbreviated birth name, Liholiho), the King of the Sandwich Islands.⁸

Politics had changed at the Sandwich Islands since Starbuck's last visit. Liholiho had eliminated his last internal threat by taking control of King Kaumuali'i's leeward islands. American missionaries had published a native language alphabet, and the promise of literacy sparked native interest in the missionaries' religion. American traders crowded the port and city of Honolulu with merchandise and trading vessels, seeking sandalwood for the Canton markets. The missionaries' activities threatened to disrupt the traders' licentious lifestyle and underhanded sales tactics. Community tensions grew as the traders pushed back hard against the growing influence of the missionaries. Conflict between the missionaries and the traders over control of the king's actions threatened to engulf Liholiho's ability to govern his kingdom.

Captain Starbuck had been well-liked by the missionaries during his first voyage to the Sandwich Islands in 1820 because he had befriended them—donating to their orphans' fund, banding together with Captain William Pigot to help with the missionaries' homebuilding, carrying letters for them, and even leaving his ship's surgeon, Dr. Joshua Williams, ashore to tend American missionary Elisha Loomis' wife, Maria, during her first confinement in mid-1820.⁹ On this second trip, however, Starbuck exhibited a very different personality, and there are no friendly references to him in missionary journals. In fact, as soon as he arrived, Starbuck began a pattern of abusive behavior that in some cases even turned violent. John Rose's journal provides some of the details, and other details are gleaned from missionary William Ellis' 1823 report to his London Missionary Society (LMS) superiors.

Starbuck's arrival in July 1822 happened to coincide with one of Liholiho's periods of heavy drinking.¹⁰ The Captain seems to have struck up an immediate familiarity with the king, for it was at Liholiho's quayside Pākākā home that Starbuck's first vicious outburst occurred. Sometime between July 29, when *L'Aigle* towed the returning *Mermaid* into Honolulu Harbor, and August 2, when *L'Aigle* sailed to Fanning Island, Starbuck directed a rant of foul abuse against LMS representative George Bennet and had to be led away from Bennet by the *Mermaid's* Captain Kent.¹¹ During a subsequent short visit to Honolulu Harbor (probably in late September 1822, when the king's August 16, 1822 order outlawing brandy would have been posted), Starbuck angrily pulled down and actually trampled on postings of the king's orders. Starbuck even shouted abuse at the king himself in the king's own house because Liholiho had failed to order that his fort fire a salute for the Captain when he came ashore.¹² On January 5, 1823, while anchored in the Maui roads, Starbuck and his crew shouted threats and fired several shots at native chiefs who had dared to demand payment for delivering water to his ship. Ashore a few days later, some of *L'Aigle's* company "cobbed, tarred & feather'd" the unnamed and unlucky Englishman who had persuaded the natives to charge for the water. A very pleased Starbuck rewarded those members of his crew with \$70.00.¹³

It may have been during *L'Aigle's* September 1822 visit to Honolulu that Starbuck took on board a young native woman "of very fine form." Starbuck's solicitor later argued on Starbuck's behalf that the reason why the young lady joined the ship's company had nothing to do with her looks—no, it was because of the "singular keenness of her vision, which enabled her to spy out the whales which the captain was in pursuit of."¹⁴ In any event, with the young woman aboard, *L'Aigle* left Honolulu on January 26, 1823 for the whaling grounds off Japan. Eight months later, with more than 275 tons of whale oil from 60 whales stowed aboard, and with more than half his crew "being ill of the scurvy," Starbuck advised his owners that he had steered *L'Aigle* for O'ahu and would finish filling the ship's hold with whale oil within two months' time. The young lady with the keen vision—who was now very pregnant—also needed to reach O'ahu soon so that she could give birth ashore.¹⁵

Starbuck's hubris would have been offended by the reception he

received when *L'Aigle* returned to Honolulu on October 1, 1823 because the harbor pilot tried to charge him double the usual duties to enter. Starbuck declined to pay, and only after the king returned from Maui six days later did *L'Aigle* accept a tow into the outer harbor.¹⁶ Back on shore, the very pregnant young lady sang Valentine Starbuck's praises to one and all, and Starbuck soon became "a prodigious favourite with the ladies of the Sandwich Islands."¹⁷ His reputation even reached court circles, and crew members later remembered that Queen Kamamalu was "highly interested by the account which the young female gave of the pleasant manner in which she spent her time on board the vessel."¹⁸ As had become his practice, Starbuck spent most of his port-time ashore.

DECISION

October 1823 was a dangerous time to be at O'ahu. The king had been tricked into another drinking bout by American traders while he was at Lahaina in September. As a result, some of his chiefs spread tales around Honolulu that all the white men would be expelled from the island.¹⁹ Then Liholiho and his chiefs took an extraordinary step: they stopped trading and refused to permit any of their people to trade. A report circulated that the king and his chiefs would not pay their sandalwood debts.²⁰ Talk of rebellion made the gossip rounds, and Edmund Butler, an American resident, warned the king on October 16 that "the gentlemen" (meaning whites) were going to kill him.²¹ Clearly, threats against him from members of the American trading community had reached the point where Liholiho needed to take bold, decisive action.

It may not have been coincidence that on that same day Starbuck ordered the ship's company to return from shore duty and put *L'Aigle* in shape for a long voyage. Although the winter whaling season at the Sandwich Islands would begin shortly, Starbuck did not intend to join in the hunt.²² Liholiho sailed for Maui on October 21, but inexplicably aborted the trip and returned to Honolulu by 3 p.m.²³ Ten days later, without any advance warning, Liholiho began a momentous journey to share astounding news with his chiefs.

On October 31, the king departed Honolulu aboard *L'Aigle's* sister ship, the *Princess Mary*, claiming to be sailing to Maui.²⁴ Instead,

the *Princess Mary* steered for the island of Hawai'i, arriving at Kailua on the island's western coast on November 4. There Liholiho shared with Chief "John Adams" Kuakini, John Young, and missionary Asa Thurston his startling intention: he was sailing to England to meet with King George! A short time later, Liholiho boarded another ship and sailed to Maui to share his news with his council of chiefs.²⁵ Meanwhile, back at Honolulu on November 4—the same day that Liholiho arrived at Kailua—Starbuck told *L'Aigle's* crew that Liholiho had sent for them to meet him at Maui.²⁶ These coordinated actions reveal that the whaling captain and the king had become unlikely allies in an extraordinary plan—and they must have put their plan together between the time Liholiho arrived at Honolulu from Lahaina on October 7 and the time he sailed for Hawai'i island on October 31.

News that Liholiho intended to sail to England aboard *L'Aigle* reached Honolulu's foreign community on November 8. Suddenly, reported the trader Stephen Reynolds, there was a "great stir among the chiefs about the king going to England."²⁷ Alarmed by the news and certain that the king's plan must be poorly conceived, missionaries Hiram Bingham and William Ellis swung into action. They wangled an invitation to join the king's council meeting and hastened to arrange passage to Lahaina. *L'Aigle* still lay off Honolulu Harbor, and Bingham and Ellis quickly boarded.²⁸ On November 11, the wind that Starbuck awaited materialized, and *L'Aigle* sailed for Maui.²⁹

When *L'Aigle* arrived at Lahaina the next day, Starbuck went directly into a meeting with the king while the missionaries went into a meeting with the chiefs.³⁰ When Liholiho met formally with his chiefs two days later, he told them that he intended the journey in order to obtain British protection and George IV's support for his rule.³¹ The chiefs quickly realized that "the king's mind was determinately set on the voyage," and so "the consent of the chiefs was therefore speedily given."³² The chiefs, however, also knew Starbuck's reputation as a troublemaker, and they had heard of the captain's intemperate boasts that he intended to restrict Liholiho's London contacts only to himself, his friends, and *L'Aigle's* owners. Liholiho planned to take \$25,000 with him, and the chiefs feared that Starbuck and *L'Aigle's* owners would drain their king of all his money and leave him destitute and far from home. When the chiefs questioned him, however, Starbuck told a different story, saying that "the king will want for nothing

in England.” Starbuck would not even charge the king for his passage—but here he hedged—of course, *L’Aigle’s* owners might choose to charge something for the royal suite’s passage after the suite had arrived in London.³³

The king and his chiefs agreed that Liholiho needed a competent interpreter to travel with him, and they asked Starbuck to permit the Englishman William Ellis and his family to join the royal suite. Starbuck adamantly and persistently refused. His reasons were both implausible and baffling, and they failed to reassure Liholiho’s chiefs: “I mean to take an old resident with me, well acquainted with the language—All I want of an interpreter is one that shall say what I tell him—I do not want Mr. Ellis to go.”³⁴ Fearing that Starbuck had a trick up his sleeve and that he might try to misrepresent an unsuspecting Liholiho to George IV, the chiefs also insisted that the king should refuse to travel on *L’Aigle* if Starbuck continued to refuse to transport the Ellis family.³⁵ Meanwhile, Liholiho moved ahead with other arrangements. He nominated his younger brother as his successor, finalized the selection of members of his suite, and decided on the gifts that he would present to King George.³⁶

Promptly validating the chiefs’ low opinion of his character, Starbuck retaliated by getting the king drunk and urging him to agree to travel to England without William Ellis. But even though he was heavily intoxicated, Liholiho would not agree.³⁷ Starbuck, however, seemed confident that he could convince the king to leave Ellis behind. Even John Rose thought it was a sure thing, for he confidently recorded in his notes from the day of the chiefs’ meeting that “the king was going to England with us.”³⁸ *L’Aigle’s* crew moved ahead with their planning and boarded about 100 pigs and “boat loads of potatoes” from one of the king’s brigs in expectation of the journey.³⁹

On Tuesday, November 18, with the chiefs still insisting that Ellis should travel as a member of the royal suite, the king, his queens, and several chiefs returned to Honolulu aboard *L’Aigle*.⁴⁰ Once back at O’ahu, Liholiho’s eagerness to make the journey overcame his desire to have Ellis as his interpreter. After they returned to O’ahu, later noted one of *L’Aigle’s* crew, “it was finally settled that they should come to England, though the Americans endeavoured to persuade them from it.”⁴¹

DEPARTURE

Preparations for departure intensified. Kuakini handled the provisioning of the ship for the king. Among other food brought on board was some salted dog's flesh, a favourite dish with the Sandwich Islanders.⁴² Liholiho provisioned the ship free of charge, but that did not prevent Starbuck from submitting provisioning charges of \$360 to *L'Aigle's* owners for reimbursement once he was back in London. Neither would Liholiho have charged harbor fees, but Starbuck later submitted a \$60 reimbursement request for them also.⁴³

While the ship's crew made ready, the mission ladies went to work creating a wardrobe of rich, elegant, silk dresses for Kamamalu.⁴⁴ The men of the mission prepared letters to their superiors at Boston and London, describing the circumstances surrounding Liholiho's decision to make the proposed voyage, Liholiho's goals for the voyage, and how the king's absence might affect the government and the efforts of the mission.⁴⁵ Traders and merchants bustled about the king, getting their accounts in for payment before he should depart.⁴⁶ Liholiho appointed both Kalanimoku and Ka'ahumanu as regents for his younger brother.⁴⁷ Even so, a July 3, 1824 London journal article flatly states that Liholiho would not leave his kingdom until John Young had sanctioned the journey.⁴⁸

At the chiefs' request, both Hiram Bingham and William Ellis preached to packed congregations on November 23.⁴⁹ *L'Aigle* left Honolulu's inner harbor on November 25, but Liholiho waited until 10 a.m. on November 27 to board the small boat that would ferry him out to *L'Aigle*.⁵⁰ No monarch more enjoyed the love and reverence of his subjects, opined the author of the July 3, 1824 article, quoting an unnamed eyewitness. While "the parting with the inhabitants at Mowee was very affecting," it was "particularly so at Woa-hoo."⁵¹ His people thronged the beach near Pākākā quayside as Liholiho settled himself into the small boat, accompanied by his principal chiefs. As the boat left the shore, the loud weeping of the people mingled with the roar of cannon from the fort and from the forty vessels lying in the harbor:⁵²

At his departure the natives gathered round him, and tore their hair, and shriek'd and yell'd with the most frantic gestures. The King was

The Ship go into harbor
 October 10th Light Barges and clear this day the King arrived here from
 Hawaii. Got our Anchor and was towed into the outer
 harbor and Moored Head & Stern and then all Parties
 went ashore
 11th This day the Boat was towed in & Moored close to our
 16th The Ship's Company came aboard and began to refit
 the Ship. Employed all the remainder of this month in
 refitting & painting the Ship & receiving our necessary Supplies
 November 1st A great number of whalers both English & Americans
 were lying here and some coming in every day besides
 some North West men from America & the King's Vessel
 this day the Captⁿ came aboard and gave orders to get
 ready for sea. The King went out for us to go to Hawaii
 as he was gone in the Princess Mary a ship belonging
 to our owners.
 6th At 6 A.M. the Pilot came aboard here up the Anchor
 warped the Ship into the Channel at 11 A.M. cast loose
 our Stern fast and got safe over the bar and made Sail
 for Oahu with 2 Chiefs on board
 7th Fresh breezes & pleasant weather at 7 A.M. came to anchor in
 Lyonsa Rhodes 11 or 12 fathoms water the Captⁿ went ashore
 to visit the King &c
 11th Received intelligence that the King was going to England
 with us. Got ready to receive Stock on board
 15th Received on board from one of the King's Barges about 100
 & Boat loads of potatoes we then weighed anchor & made sail
 for Hawaii in Comp^y with the Princess Mary & sent of the
 King's Vessel. we had on board the King & Queen & one
 of the Chiefs of the Islands
 17th At 9 A.M. let go the Anchor in Lyonsa Rhodes where the
 King & fleet went ashore. lay here till the 27th arriving in
 Stock so we took in about 100 more Pigs also 4 Bushels
 of Sheep 30 Goats & about 150 Pounds of Tallow
 28th The King & came attended by a great number of the natives

John Rose's November 11 entry that "the King was going to England with us," followed by his November 15 entry that the ship had taken on "boat loads of potatoes" in preparation for the journey. John Rose's November 28 entry describes the scene onboard *L'Aigle* at departure from Honolulu. Photographs courtesy of Charles Payton,

Remarks on board the *L. Eagle* of London

making great lamentations at 2 o'clock the Queen came aboard
 when they parted with their subjects who was very much
 affected at his going away At 2 o'clock our sail went
 a salute from the Forts and the Ships & Bussel in the
 Harbour which we returned with 9 Guns & stood out to
 Sea The following are the names of the Passengers *Don Pedro*
 or King, *Urcia* & *Comis* his Son, *Comandero*, *Noted chief*
Raymundo & *Alain* his wife, *Capt. Pach* a *Corporal* & *two*
Hypanots with their Attendants 12 in number

Nov^r 29th Fresh breezes & clear sea at 9 A.M. took the *Seymour's*
 overboard and put away the whaling gear

30th Employed clearing Docket &c

December 1st Saw a shoal of sperm whales bound to the Northward
 all sail set split the Main Top sail & set up the Main
 top sail & went about the Tilt & bent another

3rd Bent a new Main Top sail people employed as necessary
 about the Rigging

7th Rose 24 Hours strong breezes and squally Lat 5. 20. N 0

8th Spoke the ship *Stearns* of Long Harbour Lat 1. 43. N

10th Mr. Hopkins gave us a call left the passengers singing
 the *Te Deum* dispensed with the usual ceremony of throwing

12th Moderate breezes from the East at Noon discovered an
 Island ahead at 2 P.M. sent 2 Boats on shore at 6
 returned with hay for the Cattle the Capt. & by others
 staid ashore all night with the expectation of getting
 some cattle by the morning. The ship stood off till 12 o'clock
 when it became calm

13th At daylight found we had drifted out of sight of the
 island being to leeward all day with a light breeze but
 saw nothing of the island. The people ashore without arms
 or provisions

14th Light breezes. At 6 P.M. saw the island about 4 leagues
 distant during the night saw the gun that *Frasco* runs
 away by the Capt.

Somerset, England, owner of the journal. Mr. Payton asserts copyright privileges and granted the author permission to use his photographs of portions of Rose's journal solely to accompany this article.

dressed in European fashion, and when the boat shoved off from the shore, he stood up without betraying the slightest emotion; while the natives swam round and clung to various parts, crying and yelling with the greatest bitterness.⁵³

When Liholiho reached the ship, he found “the decks were crowded with queens and chiefs, pigs and poultry. Of pigs there were about 300; goats, 36; sheep, 6; and bullocks, 4; with 8 dozen of fowls, and 4 dozen of ducks,—all adrift together; and potatoes and powey [poi] from stem to stern.”⁵⁴

Still at her home when Liholiho departed and knowing that a canoe waited to transport her to the ship, Kamamalu arose from her mat, lovingly embraced her mother and other relatives, and walked out of her home towards the quay. As she passed along through the crowd, people fell to their knees and bathed her feet with tears, and loud wailing arose from the crowd of thousands who thronged the shore.⁵⁵ At the quay, she movingly addressed a farewell to her country and to her deceased father, Kamehameha, to whom she had promised that she would always follow Liholiho faithfully.⁵⁶ With a final prayer and “*Aloha nui oukou!*” Kamamalu stepped away from shore. A crowd of people waded into the water after her, waving their hands in sorrow and crying out *Auwe! Auwe!* while the cannon roared from the walls of the fort.⁵⁷

Out at the ship, *L'Aigle* had gotten under way amid great confusion on deck, and the confusion intensified at 2 o'clock when Kamamalu “came alongside in a double canoe paddled by 150 men, and attended by the princess of [Kaua'i], a most immense woman, as big as a tun butt. The Queen joined her lamentations with the rest; and what with the grunting of the pigs and the howling of the natives, we were almost stunned.”⁵⁸

Immediately the royal couple parted with their subjects, who were very much affected by Liholiho's leaving. Liholiho's principal chiefs took a respectful and affectionate leave of the king and his attendants.⁵⁹ “The King preserved his composure till the Chiefs and other Queens took their leave, and then his grief overpowered him.” About 3 p.m., *L'Aigle* “made sail under a salute from the Fort and the ships & vessels in the harbour which we returned with 9 guns & stood out to sea,” while “the natives in the canoes gave us three cheers, and thus

we quitted the Sandwich Islands.”⁶⁰ To the watchers, the sinking of the masts of the king's ship and his departure were like seeing Liholiho and his party go down into their graves.⁶¹

Unbeknownst to Liholiho, the disreputable Frenchman John Rives had connived with Captain Starbuck to come along so that Rives could act as interpreter. Starbuck had intimated this sort of surprise to Bingham while they were all still on Maui when he said that “I mean to take an old resident with me, well acquainted with the language.” Back on shore, it was widely agreed that Rives and Starbuck wanted to get their hands on Liholiho's money.⁶²

Rounding out Liholiho's chosen party were Governor Boki and his wife, Liliha, “Captain Jack” Kapihe, Chief Kekuanaoa, steward Manuia, Noukana (or Naukana), Kauluhaimalama, servant Na'aiweuweu, and James Kanehoa Young, the second son of John Young. Kanehoa Young was about the same age as Liholiho, had traveled widely throughout the world, and spoke English. Young's language skills would cause trouble for Starbuck and Rives, because Young would jeopardize their attempts to control the king's communications.⁶³

NEAR DISASTER

The day after leaving port, Starbuck jettisoned the costly tryworks utensils used for boiling whale oil and put away the whaling gun. Heading southeast on a course for Cape Horn, the ship encountered mostly fresh breezes and clear weather, with one or two days of squally weather. After eleven days at sea, *L'Aigle* crossed the equator into the southern hemisphere. John Rose recorded that the ship's company observed the usual customs on December 10: “Mr. Neptune gave us a call but the passengers paying the tribute dispensed with the usual ceremony of shaving, etc.”⁶⁴

At noon on December 12, with moderate breezes blowing from the eastward, the ship's company spotted an uncharted island ahead.⁶⁵ Originally named Volunteer Island but now called Starbuck Island, it is vegetated with scrub, herbs, and low grasses, but it lacks a supply of potable water.⁶⁶ At 2 p.m., Starbuck and several others went ashore in two boats to explore. Four hours later, the two boats returned to the ship carrying hay that had been cut for the cattle. Even though they had no drinking water or food with them, the captain decided that he

and six others would sleep ashore that night, expecting to get refreshments from the ship by the next morning.⁶⁷

L'Aigle stood off the island until midnight, when she became becalmed. But at daylight on the 13th those left aboard ship found that they had drifted out of sight of the island, whose coordinates had not been recorded. Appearing as a long, low line of white sand, Starbuck Island can be inconspicuous when strong currents sweep past it to the west-southwest. Not knowing precisely where the island was,



Captain Valentine Starbuck sighted an uncharted island in the present-day Kiribati group on December 10, 1823, and it became the scene of an unplanned—and dangerous—adventure for Starbuck and others aboard *L'Aigle*. Starbuck Island is circled on the map. Courtesy of Wikipedia Commons.

the crew trimmed the sails so that the ship could beat to windward while they looked and looked for it. But the day passed, and they saw no sight of the island. The people ashore had had no water for more than twenty-four hours. Another day dawned. Finally, at 6 p.m. on December 14 while sailing under light breezes, the ship's crew spotted the island about four leagues distant. As *L'Aigle* drew closer to the island during the night, the crew and passengers could see a fire onshore set by the captain.⁶⁸

Unable to launch any rescue action in the dark, the ship's crew had to wait until morning. At 7 a.m. on the 15th, the crew lowered a boat and sent some provisions and water ashore to the stranded group. However, with very heavy surf running, the boat could not reach the beach. Starbuck Island is now well-known for its dangerous fringing reefs extending out from steep beaches. When the seas are running high, these reefs can make landings difficult for periods of several days.⁶⁹

Under great difficulty, the captain and another man swam out from the shore through the heavy surf, reached the boat and returned to the ship. Back on board *L'Aigle* and now in command, Starbuck sent off two other boats to rescue the rest of the people ashore. It took six hours under very difficult and dangerous conditions before the crew of the two boats succeeded in getting the people off the island and back aboard ship; but everything that had been taken to the island had to be left behind. The stranded group told the others that they had lived during their three-day ordeal by eating raw fish and drinking urine and bird's blood. They had dug a well eight feet deep but only found bad water.⁷⁰

John Rose's journal identifies the other members of the shore group by referring to them only as "the others," or "another man," or "people." Were the "others" who were stranded ashore some of the Sandwich Islanders? Perhaps even Liholiho himself? Not used to long sea voyages, and having been aboard *L'Aigle* for more than two weeks, some of the Sandwich Islanders may have cajoled Starbuck into letting them off the ship for a night's respite from the sea, and no passenger carried more weight with Starbuck than the king. Fortunately for the stranded group (after the initial near-disaster in allowing the ship to drift away), the steady, practiced, seamanship of *L'Aigle's* crew finally averted disaster.⁷¹

AT SEA

Under way once again, the crew and passengers observed Christmas and New Year's Day in the Pacific Ocean waters off the southern coast of Chile, heading for Drake Passage. The weather became thick and hazy as they neared the 500 mile-wide Passage between Cape Horn, Chile's southern-most point, and the South Shetland Islands of Antarctica. Fresh breezes carried them along, changing to strong blowing winds as they entered the Passage, where notoriously rough seas can spawn waves as high as thirty feet. On January 21, on a bearing of north-north-east, they sighted Diego Ramirez, a tiny group of islands lying about 30 miles south of Cape Horn. With these small islands approximately 20 miles distant from the ship, *L'Aigle's* crew could mark her course direction into the Passage itself. The swift Antarctic current then picked them up and propelled them quickly through the Passage. Five days later *L'Aigle* had traveled about 275 miles north into the Atlantic Ocean close enough to the Falkland group to sight one of its more than 700 islands.⁷²

Affairs aboard ship fell into a routine as the long journey progressed. Sometimes the Sandwich Islanders were seasick, which generally caused them to eat twice as much as at any other time, usually chickens or duck. Whenever a pig was killed the raw entrails composed a delicious feast. The Sandwich Islands men varied their dress occasionally, from a *malo* around the middle, to their European-style long coats and trousers. The queen sometimes dressed in the beautiful silk dresses made for her by Mrs. Sybil Bingham and Mrs. Nancy Ruggles, and the dresses soon were covered with filth and grease. One of their greatest luxuries was to strip naked on deck, and have a member of the crew heave buckets of water over them.⁷³

All of the Sandwich Islanders, including the king and queen, were very affable with the crew, "and it was no uncommon sight to see black and white [eating] together, like the checkers on a draft board." When Kamamalu had a bit too much to drink, she became very loving and would kiss and hug Liholiho, until she carried it too far, "and then she used to get knock'd down." Their majesties were uncommonly attached, and if either one was sick the other would sit crying by the sick one's side.⁷⁴

With little else to do to occupy their time, Liholiho's suite gambled

and played cards as the ship made its way along. Islanders were well known as very skillful and enthusiastic card players and gamblers. Liholiho himself had learned to play whist while still a teenager, and Kamamalu enjoyed betting on a good card game.⁷⁵ They also drank a lot. Starbuck had made sure that there was sufficient liquor and grog on board for everyone, and he and Rives encouraged them to drink often.⁷⁶ The islanders took their liquor neat, and seldom drank less than a pint at a time. When one of them got drunk, all of them got drunk.⁷⁷

RIO DE JANEIRO

Early February found *L'Aigle* making her way north along the coast of Argentina, encountering strong breezes and hazy weather, occasionally spotting another sail on the horizon. Sometime during the second week in February 1824 they reached the waters off the coast of Brazil. Early on the evening of February 16, *L'Aigle* arrived at the first fort guarding the river entrance to Brazil's capital, Rio de Janeiro. Frequently threatened by invasions from pirates and buccaneers who sought to hijack lucrative colonial shipments, Rio de Janeiro had developed a series of defensive forts to guard the city itself. Having arrived at the first of the forts, Captain Starbuck sent a boat ashore to report the ship's arrival to the Brazilian authorities. The following day at noon, *L'Aigle* weighed anchor and stood up the river. Once at anchor off the middle fort, Starbuck ordered his crew to fire a royal salute, which was returned by the fort and the Brazilian fleet lying at anchor.⁷⁸ His Britannic Majesty's 74-gun ship *La Spartiate* also lay at anchor, and the English Admiral promised to send his barge to convey the royal party ashore. After waiting two days for the promised barge to materialize, however, Liholiho and Kamamalu landed using one of the country boats and "took up their lodgings at a private house in a retired part of the town."⁷⁹

John Rose's journal does not explain why Starbuck detoured to Rio de Janeiro rather than sailing directly to London. *L'Aigle* carried at least 275 tons of whale oil whose profits would depend on the price the cargo could bring after arrival at London, and yet Starbuck voluntarily lengthened his voyage twice—first, by lingering at the Sandwich Islands for nearly a month, then by making what turned out to be an

18-day side trip to Rio de Janeiro. In fact, Starbuck would arrive in England during a period of falling oil prices, and his delay did reduce his employers' profits. Later, *L'Aigle's* owners would question his judgment and sue Starbuck for failing to protect their interests.⁸⁰

At Brazil in February 1824 the king of the Sandwich Islands unwittingly ran smack into a confluence of political interests involving continental Europe, Great Britain, the Americas, and the United States. In September 1822, the Portuguese-Brazilian prince, Dom Pedro, declared Brazil independent of Portuguese monarchical authority and proclaimed himself the first emperor of Brazil. The early years of his reign were tumultuous, but by the time Liholiho arrived in February 1824, Emperor Dom Pedro had consolidated his power internally, although external political threats still loomed.

In 1823, France—anxious to regain a footing in the Americas—joined with Spain to restore European power to Spain's lost colonies and invited the backing of the Holy Alliance of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Great Britain, appalled by the possibility of France regaining influence over the Americas, had withdrawn from the Holy Alliance shortly after it was formed, largely through Russian efforts. In December 1823, the United States announced its own Americas policy. Through what came to be known as the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. informed Europe that any effort to reintroduce European political influence into the New World would be considered by the United States “as dangerous to our peace and safety.”

While the British Foreign Office sorted out what the Monroe Doctrine might mean to its own political and commercial interests in the territories around the Americas, including territories lying in the northern Pacific Ocean, France and Spain attempted to gauge the level of commitment of the United States to its new policy. Rio de Janeiro's port became a gathering area for ships from these nations as they monitored each other's actions. So it is not surprising that when *L'Aigle* reached anchor near Rio's middle fort, Starbuck found already at anchor the 74-gun British warship, a French frigate, an American frigate, and a large number of ships from many different nations.⁸¹

Here it was, just two months after the pronouncement of the Monroe Doctrine, and the king of the Sandwich Islands was on his way to England to tell George IV “I want *British* protection for my islands!” While this political state of affairs did not intrude on Liholiho's visit

to Brazil, the hegemonic interests of the United States, Great Britain, and even Imperial Russia are important to Liholiho's story (and thus to Hawaiian history) because they would color Liholiho's relations with Great Britain and—as it later turned out—very probably adversely affected his ability to meet George IV.

John Rose's journal gives no details of the visit ashore, and it is the July 3, 1824 London journal article that provides much of what is known about the time spent at Rio de Janeiro. Upon learning that a brother-monarch had arrived in his capital city, Emperor Dom Pedro promptly returned from his country house to pay the proper courtesies. The emperor quickly granted the royal couple an interview and demonstrated considerable kindness and affability. Dom Pedro presented Liholiho with a handsome diamond-hilted sword in a gold sheath, and the empress gifted Kamamalu with a pair of diamond earrings. Liholiho in turn presented the Emperor with a feather cloak and a small feather *kahili*.⁸² Others at the royal reception remembered later that Liholiho—no doubt very gratified by his courteous reception—asked that the emperor be adopted as a brother of Kalanimoku and Boki. Lord Thomas Alexander Cochrane, a British naval hero from the Napoleonic Wars and now a free-lancer who headed the emperor's military, paid the royal couple great attention, “as indeed did everybody else.”⁸³

When the English Consul General at Rio de Janeiro learned of the general purpose of Liholiho's intended visit to England, he also hosted a ball in their honor. Other guests commented that the royal party showed great gentleness and good humour, and a readiness to accommodate themselves to the customs of those they were among.⁸⁴ Later Liholiho and Kamamalu visited British Admiral George Eyre on board the *Spartiate*, and were much delighted with their reception. When they returned from their visit, a seaman reported the king described the two decks of *Spartiate* as “one ship a-top of t'other.”⁸⁵

Two of the vignettes from the July 3, 1824 London journal article seem contrived simply to titillate British readers. For example, the article reports that the royal couple frequently returned to *L'Aigle* “to get a mess of raw fish and entrails, as the Captain would not suffer them to eat such garbage before the Portuguese.” And, “the Queen occasioned many blushes among the ladies by scratching wherever there was an itching, but it was all taken in good part.”⁸⁶

A third titillating vignette, however, seems genuine. One day Captain Starbuck came ashore with some ladies, and saw hundreds of spectators gathered around the landing-place watching Boki take a swim in the harbor. Boki—*sans* clothes—came ashore as soon as he caught sight of Starbuck, and came up to converse with the captain's party. The ladies were taken aback, and the captain rebuked him for his indelicacy, but Boki showed no shame. On being scolded by Starbuck, and asked whether he was not aware of the impropriety of appearing naked in front of the ladies, Boki replied, "No; they look me, me see them—that very good."⁸⁷

While at Rio de Janeiro, Captain Starbuck and John Rives spent about \$3,000 from Liholiho's funds of \$25,000.⁸⁸ John Rose's journal does not record any expenses for provisioning activity.⁸⁹ Certainly there must have been legitimate expenses which Liholiho would have incurred, such as payment for the house—including servants and provisions—in which the royal couple stayed. No doubt there were port duties. Perhaps the royal couple needed to purchase clothes appropriate for court circles, and they may have had expenses for social obligations. But without a clear accounting for the \$3,000 expenditure, the suspicion persists that Starbuck and Rives may have cheated Liholiho.

That suspicion is furthered by the manner in which James Kanehoa Young separated from the royal party at Rio. As early as 1840, Kekuanaoa put the blame squarely on Rives, writing that Rives "had ill treated Kanehoa and caused him to be set on shore at Rio Janeiro."⁹⁰ More facts came out when Kamehameha III's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert C. Wyllie queried Young in 1851 about specific details of the journey, including how Young came to separate from the suite at Rio. According to Young, Rives was jealous of Young's English language abilities and went so far as to ask the king not to allow Young to speak English while they were in Rio. But when the British Consul there discovered how well he, Young, spoke English, the Consul turned to Young for translating help and cut John Rives out of the action. After that happened, Rives and Starbuck sent a message to Young claiming that it came from the king, telling Young to leave the royal suite and debark from *L'Aigle*. Young believed them and obediently left the ship. He determined, however, to make his own way to England.⁹¹

Much later, after Young had rejoined the suite in England, Boki

told Young that the order for him to leave the ship did not come from the king but was a trick engineered by Starbuck and Rives in order to keep the king entirely under their own influence. Young added that all of the chiefs in the royal suite agreed that Starbuck and Rives had tricked him to stay behind because they wanted to keep the king entirely under their own influence.⁹² One contemporary source may have unwittingly confirmed the trick by reporting that “Mr. Young was left behind on the order of the king because he was ‘troublesome.’”⁹³ The July 3, 1824 London journal article, however, gives credence to Boki’s explanation: “One of [Young’s] sons came with us, as interpreter, as far as Rio Janeiro; but he fell out with the skipper, and so they left him behind.”⁹⁴ All of this makes the origin of Samuel Kamakau’s allegation that Young “got drunk” and thus missed the ship’s sailing at Rio very mysterious.⁹⁵ Kamakau does not cite a source for his 1868 claim, but he surely could have discovered Young’s very different 1851 responses to Wyllie’s queries because they were published in 1851 in the *Polynesian*, a Honolulu weekly.

Ready to leave Rio and resume the voyage, *L’Aigle* weighed anchor on March 7 and stood out of the river under very light breezes headed for the Atlantic Ocean. A British Admiral—unnamed by John Rose—sent a boat’s crew to direct *L’Aigle* in getting under way, and the whaler left Rio de Janeiro with the same ceremony of salutes as it had received on arrival. By four p.m., Rio de Janeiro was ten miles distant.⁹⁶

Captain Starbuck carried several letters addressed to the British Admiralty from the British contingent at Rio, most of them communicating military and political information about the Brazilian situation. However, one of the letters—marked *Secret* and written two days before *L’Aigle* departed Rio—dealt entirely with Liholiho. George Eyre, Rear Admiral and Commander-in-Chief of British forces at Rio de Janeiro, wrote to the Secretary of the Admiralty, J. W. Croker, to forewarn him that Liholiho was on his way to England “to put his islands, he says, under His Majesty’s protection.”⁹⁷

None of Liholiho’s journalists describe his meeting with the United States Consul Condé Raguet at Rio, but apparently he did, for the consul wrote a similar letter on March 8 to U. S. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Raguet reported on the intentions of the king of the Sandwich Islands and his own suggestion to Liholiho that the interests of the Sandwich Islands might be furthered by a visit to the

United States. Raguét seemed to believe that Starbuck, “a Nantucket man, to whom the King is much attached,” might facilitate matters and arrange a U. S. visit.⁹⁸ Apparently Raguét had made Starbuck’s acquaintance as well.

PASSAGE TO ENGLAND

Soon after leaving Rio one of the ship’s boys died. The 16-year old had become ill with dysentery about a week before *L’Aigle* sailed. The Sandwich Islanders were very much affected by the young man’s death and were particularly attentive during the reading of the burial service. One accident after another happened throughout their first week out of port—a crew member fell overboard and nearly drowned, jib booms broke, and the force of fresh, squally breezes carried away sails.⁹⁹

The travelers frequently sighted land as *L’Aigle* maintained a northward course just off the South American continent. As March drew to a close, *L’Aigle*’s crew occasionally sighted other ships also steering northward. Three weeks out of Rio at latitude five degrees south, the whaler turned north-north-east and left behind the coast of South America. The weather continued squally and unsettled, and they crossed the equator—this time without ceremony—and reentered the northern hemisphere.¹⁰⁰

Shipboard boredom must have been intense. Only the passing of a large shoal of sperm whales or the sighting of an occasional brig or two could lift on-board ennui. In years’ past, Liholiho had remembered his father and marked his own accession date of May 8 with lavish, lengthy festivals. Now out in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean traveling to a foreign land on the most risky venture of his reign, Liholiho no doubt keenly remembered the prior year’s gala festival and determined to mark the date somehow. And so on April 14—a bit early, but it was a fine day—Liholiho and his suite marked the anniversary with “a great drinking bout,” and Starbuck added to the celebration by firing off 45 guns.¹⁰¹

By the first of May, *L’Aigle* had traveled far enough north that the crew could begin to mark their passage by their distance from Cornwall’s Lizard Point, the most southerly point in Britain. Only 1,304 miles of their long voyage remained before they would sight Lizard’s

lighthouse. Now they passed close enough to other ships to exchange information. Land birds flew by on May 9, and distance from the Lizard had shrunk to 356 miles. *L'Aigle* made its way northward towards the English Channel, tacking and wearing the ship against the wind.¹⁰²

One of Liholiho's suite, Kauluhaimalama, died on May 11. John Rose thought drinking "too freely of rum on Sunday last" might have caused his death.¹⁰³ Kauluhaimalama "was ill for two days," Liholiho later wrote home to his chiefs, "and died on the 13th, the night of *Hua*. The following day, which was *Akua*, he was buried at sea in the same month of *Ka'aona*."¹⁰⁴ Liholiho, Kamamalu, and their suite appeared on deck dressed in deep black and crepe for the ceremony that would commit Kauluhaimalama's body to the deep. John Rives prepared to read the service in their native language, but just before he began:

the Captain inquired if all hands were in attendance. The Mate said, 'Yes, all but the Cook.' So the Cook was called, and as he came aft, plastered with grease and as black as the best of 'em, the Queen couldn't help laughing at the ludicrous figure he made; but a nudge from the King brought her to recollection, and the look of sorrow was resumed.¹⁰⁵

Another member of the crew managed to turn Kauluhaimalama's death to his advantage. Sometime earlier in the voyage, Seaman John Sparks had agreed to wash Boki's clothes in exchange for ten dollars. After Sparks finished the washing, Boki declined to pay, claiming that he had no money. Shortly before arriving in England, Boki again wanted his clothes washed and again turned to Seaman Sparks. This time Boki promised to pay Sparks the ten dollars he already owed, and another five dollars as well. After Sparks finished the job, Boki paid the five dollars but again reneged on the ten-dollar debt. Sparks figured out how to provoke Boki to pay. After Kauluhaimalama died, Sparks threatened Boki that if he didn't pay his debt, Sparks would see that he soon followed his countryman to the grave. Boki paid up. The joke was on Sparks, however, for Kauluhaimalama had been accustomed to mix in his dirty linen with Boki's and thus the two of them had defrauded Sparks by getting the dead man's clothes washed for nothing.¹⁰⁶

Now the Lizard was only 192 miles away. Soundings of the ocean's depth brought up coarse brown sand and shells. Land was not far off.¹⁰⁷

ENGLAND—AT LAST

At 11 a.m. on May 16, 1824 the crew sighted the southern coast of England. By 5 p.m. they were close enough in with the Isle of Wight for a harbor pilot to come aboard to take *L'Aigle* into Portsmouth. At daybreak on May 17, they ran through The Needles, that distinctive row of stacks of chalk rising out of the sea at the western end of the Isle of Wight.¹⁰⁸ Boki arose early that morning, and as they came close to land, he spotted a windmill. Amazed by the wonder of it, he roused all the other passengers to come on deck to look at it. None of them could make out what it was, or what made it go round. Then they spotted a steam vessel and couldn't make out what made that run, either, finally deciding that it must be witchcraft.¹⁰⁹

By 11 a.m. on May 17, *L'Aigle* lay at anchor at Ryde, on the northern coast of the Isle of Wight, in Portsmouth Harbor. After the quarantine master cleared the passengers and crew to debark, Captain Starbuck ordered carriages for the overnight trip to London. The captain himself escorted the king and queen and three others from their suite all the way to London, and he checked them into Osborne's Hotel in the fashionable Adelphi Terrace area near Charing Cross and the



Rhio Rhio (Liholiho): King of the Sandwich Islands, original lithograph. Published in the *Lady's Magazine*, June 30, 1824 [p. 334]. Courtesy of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library.

Embankment.¹¹⁰ Liholiho described his arrival to his chiefs: “On the . . . 18th which was *La‘aukukani*, we arrived in England and landed. We got into carriages and the next day *La‘aukulua*, we reached London and stayed at the Hotel.”¹¹¹ Starbuck picked up his wife in London and turned right around, arriving back on board *L’Aigle* with his wife on the evening of May 19.¹¹²

As soon as the captain returned, *L’Aigle* left Portsmouth on the last stage of her journey, headed for her final anchorage. At noon on May 23 *L’Aigle* came to anchor in the Thames River off Gravesend, and several more of the Sandwich Islanders debarked. Only steward Manuia remained aboard the ship to the owners’ docks at the City Canal, guarding the luggage and Liholiho’s money chest. *L’Aigle* finally reached the City Canal on May 24 having been out for 28 months and 19 days.¹¹³



Tamehamalu (Kamamalu): Queen of the Sandwich Islands, original lithograph. Published in the *Lady's Magazine*, August 31, 1824, [p. 442]. The Queen's dress was of white silk, her sash and headdress were of scarlet silk. Courtesy of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society library.

News that the Sandwich Islands king had come to England to meet King George traveled quickly. On the day after the ship's earlier arrival at Portsmouth Harbor, a great number of people boarded *L'Aigle* to see the king and queen only to be disappointed at discovering that the royal couple already had left the ship. The owners themselves were shocked to learn from the newspapers that *L'Aigle* had brought to England the king and queen of the Sandwich Islands. One of the owners, John Boulcott, first visited the king and queen at Osborne's Hotel a day or two after their arrival, and he visited them frequently thereafter.¹¹⁴ George Hill, another member of the owners' families, became the Sandwich Islanders' constant companion.¹¹⁵ The British government quickly appointed the Honorable Frederick G. Byng, a senior administrative member of the Foreign Office staff who had served as a young page to George IV during his regency, to attend the king and queen while they awaited an audience with George IV.¹¹⁶

FINAL CHAPTER

As is well-known, George IV refused to grant the king an immediate audience. After a few weeks of gaiety and some notoriety in London, the entire royal suite contracted the measles, and both Liholiho and Kamamalu tragically succumbed. A contrite George IV ordered Lord George Anson Byron to carry their remains and the rest of their suite back to the Sandwich Islands on *H.M.S. Blonde*. On the way home, while the *Blonde* was at Valparaiso, Chile, "Captain Jack" Kapihe died suddenly.¹¹⁷ Only seven of the nine chiefs and servants that Liholiho had chosen to accompany him lived to debark from the *Blonde* at Honolulu on May 6, 1825.¹¹⁸

Captain Starbuck had lost his influence over Liholiho even before the king's death, but the worst was yet to come for Starbuck. The owners' shock turned to anger when they examined *L'Aigle's* cargo hold and claimed to have found it short by at least 25 tons of whale oil, and then learned that the tryworks had been jettisoned. Next they examined Starbuck's accounting records and found what they thought were spurious charges for provisioning costs and harbor fees at Honolulu. Just as Starbuck had forewarned the chiefs before they sailed, John Boulcott *did* ask the king to pay for his passage. Perkins, a waiter at Osborne's Hotel, overheard their conversation, and Per-

kins thought that the king had about £3,000 in his possession. By the time Boulcott escorted Liholiho to a bank, however, the king had only £2,200 left from the \$25,000 he had boarded with at Honolulu. Even using a generous currency conversion figure and factoring in the \$3,000 expenditure at Rio de Janeiro, that is still an extraordinary diminution of funds for the king.¹¹⁹ Were it not for the fact that George IV's government stepped in and guaranteed all his expenses, Liholiho may indeed have been left destitute and far from home, just as his chiefs had feared.¹²⁰

Sometime in late July 1824, after Liholiho and Kamamalu had died of the measles, the firm of Hill, Boulcott & Hill sued Valentine Starbuck to recover their damages for a short cargo and lengthy delay in delivery.¹²¹ Starbuck retaliated with a unique defense couched in a lengthy apologia that he addressed to George IV. Bringing Liholiho to England to place his kingdom under Britain's protection was in fact a patriotic act, claimed Starbuck, and George IV should reimburse him for his expenses!¹²² George IV's ministry simply ignored Starbuck's plea, and Starbuck continued to hang about the remaining members of the royal suite.

If Starbuck had stolen Liholiho's missing dollars, he must have quickly squandered them. About ten days after *H.M.S. Blonde* departed for the Sandwich Islands, Starbuck wrote a begging letter to the Foreign Office asking for help: he was broke. *L'Aigle's* owners were pursuing their lawsuit against him, and he stood to be on the hook for significant damages. Starbuck even raised a new claim for a much smaller amount, alleging that he had advanced the king and queen pocket money on the carriage trip up from Ryde amounting to £33.16.0 and had never been repaid. But the Hon. Frederick G. Byng capsulized the Foreign Office's opinion of Starbuck's character with the curt note he appended to the captain's pleading letter: "Capt. Starbuck never advanced any claim against the Sandwichers until subsequent to their departure from England! I have every reason to disbelieve every assertion advanced in this letter."¹²³

Starbuck never did receive any money from the British government. The lawsuit brought by Hill, Boulcott & Hill came to trial in July 1825. The jury found for the owners and assessed Starbuck damages of £210.¹²⁴ That was the end of Valentine Starbuck's career in the South Seas whaling trade. His name vanishes from crew rosters

and, indeed, from all public records in Great Britain and in New England.¹²⁵

If John Rives absconded with Liholiho's missing dollars, he, too, must have quickly squandered them. Rives went to France sometime on or after August 3, 1824 to visit his parents, returning to London in time for a meeting on September 9 between the royal suite and George Canning.¹²⁶ James Kanehoa Young rejoined the suite as their interpreter while Rives was out of town, and the royal suite would not permit Rives to join them at their upcoming meeting with George IV. Rives wrote his own begging letter to the Foreign Office about a month after the *Blonde* sailed, claiming that his funds were down to only £8. His reputation at the Sandwich Islands had been ruined and he dared not return there, Rives continued, because everyone there would know that he had not been permitted to join the rest of the royal suite at their interview with George IV.¹²⁷

Kekuanaoa later testified that Boki was disgusted with Rives for pawning Liholiho's gold watch and tricking Young to leave the ship at Rio de Janeiro, and that Boki gave Rives \$400 and told him to go back to his own country.¹²⁸ Rives did return to France. In 1826, this irrepressible scoundrel duped artisans, merchants and priests into bankrolling two expeditions on the promise of Rives' ability to deliver chiefly favor once they arrived at the Sandwich Islands. Rives sailed with the first expedition to the west coast, but when the second expedition arrived at Honolulu in 1827 and discovered that Rives' reputation there had been ruined by Boki's account of his misbehavior in London, his standing with his backers collapsed. Rives finally ran out of friends and credit and died in Mexico in 1833.¹²⁹

L'Aigle, meanwhile, departed from Gravesend for the South Seas fishery grounds again on February 20, 1825 under the command of Captain Dixon, returning in October, 1827. Dixon took *L'Aigle* out a second time, and *L'Aigle* paid her last call to Honolulu harbor in late October 1829. On March 6, 1830, *L'Aigle* ran aground on a reef and was lost fifteen to twenty miles northeast of Tongatapu.¹³⁰

The wreck of *L'Aigle* ends the last chapter of the ill-starred voyage. The careers of Valentine Starbuck and John Rives had been ruined, *L'Aigle's* owners had sued Starbuck and recovered damages caused by his actions, and Kauluhaimalama and Kapihe died at sea along the way. Most poignant and tragic was the loss to Liholiho's kingdom

of their king and queen, who had set out with such high hopes and noble aims to secure the King of England's protection against other foreign powers for the safety of their Sandwich Islands.

NOTES

- ¹ A. G. E. Jones, *Volume 2, Ships Employed in the South Seas Trade 1775–1859 (Part I), Admiralty Protections from Impressment 1777–1811 (Part II), Aspects of the South Seas Trade (Part III)* (Canberra: Roebuck Book, 1992), 1: 217 [hereafter Volume 2, *Ships*]; A. G. E. Jones, *Ships employed in the South Seas trade, 1775–1861 (parts I and II) and Registrar general of shipping and seamen transcripts of registers of shipping, 1787–1862 (part III)* (Canberra: Roebuck Book, 1986), 3: 551–552 [hereafter *Ships*].
- ² Jones, *Ships*, 3: 538–539, 3: 551–552.
- ³ “Hill and Others v. Starbuck,” *Times* (London) 14 July 1825: 3.
- ⁴ John Rose, “Log, L’Aigle Whaler, 1822–1824,” microfilm, 5–6 January 1822, National Maritime Museum, UK (hereafter NMM). John Rose calls his manuscript “remarks.” Charles Payton, the owner of Rose’s manuscript and a relative of John Rose, identifies it as a private journal. Rose seems to have fleshed out his remarks after he returned to England, and that may account for the fact that his dates sometimes differ from other contemporary journal dates. Nevertheless, all citations to Rose’s journal will carry the journal entry date that Rose uses. Additionally, in order to properly cite the microfilmed manuscript and its repository, all footnotes will use the NMM title. The official ship’s log has been lost, and Rose’s journal is the only extant original document detailing the voyage.
- ⁵ <http://www.jillsfamilyancestry.com>, accessed November 10, 2009. Starbuck was born 22 May 1791 and married Mary T. Faber in London on 15 December 1821.
- ⁶ Rose, “Log,” 7–9 January 1822, NMM; Jones, *Ships*, 3: 552.
- ⁷ All are cited where appropriate.
- ⁸ Rose, “Log,” 21–27 July 1822, NMM.
- ⁹ Elisha Loomis, *Journal*, 1819–1827, 4 May to 18 July 1820, The Journal Collection, HMCS.
- ¹⁰ Agnes C. Conrad, ed., *The Letters and Journal of Francisco de Paula Marin* (Honolulu: Univ. Press of Hawaii for The Hawaiian Historical Society, 1973), 267. Starbuck may have met the king on his prior voyage, but there is no documentary proof.
- ¹¹ Rose, “Log,” 29 July–2 August 1822, NMM; William Ellis to George Burder, 20 November 1823, Letter No. 8, “Eleven Letters from Hawaii,” HMCS. *Mermaid* had delivered George IV’s present of the schooner *Prince Regent* and returned to board Daniel Tyerman, George Bennet and William Ellis, all LMS missionaries, who had sailed with the *Mermaid* in order to visit the Sandwich Islands.
- ¹² Ellis, Letter No. 8, HMCS; Conrad, ed., *Marin Journal*, 268. Ellis’ letter does not

- give the date when Starbuck tore down the proclamations, nor does it identify their content.
- ¹³ Rose, "Log," 5–12 January 1823, NMM.
- ¹⁴ "Starbuck," *Times* (London), 14 July 1825: 3.
- ¹⁵ "Starbuck," *Times* (London), 14 July 1825: 3.
- ¹⁶ Rose, "Log," 1, 10 October 1823, NMM.
- ¹⁷ "Starbuck," *Times* (London), 14 July 1825: 3.
- ¹⁸ "Starbuck," *Times* (London), 14 July 1825: 3.
- ¹⁹ C. S. Stewart, *Journal of a Residence in the Sandwich Islands, during the years 1823, 1824 and 1825* (1830; reprint, Honolulu, Hawaii: Univ. of Hawai'i Press for Friends of the Library of Hawai'i, 1970), 230–231; Conrad, ed., *Marin Journal*, 283.
- ²⁰ Charles H. Hammatt, *Ships, Furs, and Sandalwood, A Yankee Trader in Hawai'i, 1823–1825*, ed. Sandra Wagner-Wright (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 32; John C. Jones, Jr. to Marshall & Wildes, 12 October 1823, Kuykendall Collection, Univ. of Hawai'i.
- ²¹ Conrad, ed., *Marin Journal*, 283.
- ²² "Starbuck," *Times* (London), 14 July 1825: 3; Rose, "Log," 16 October, 4 November 1823, NMM.
- ²³ Conrad, ed., *Marin Journal*, 283.
- ²⁴ Hammatt, ed. Wagner-Wright, *Ships, Furs, and Sandalwood*, 33; Conrad, ed., *Marin Journal*, 283.
- ²⁵ "Letter from Rev. Asa Thurston to the Corresponding Secretary," *Missionary Herald* 21/4 (1825): 97 (hereafter *MH*); *Missionary Records, Sandwich Islands* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1839), 220, which bases its account on William Ellis' notes.
- ²⁶ Rose, "Log," 4 November 1823, NMM.
- ²⁷ Pauline N. King, ed., *Journal of Stephen Reynolds, Volume I: 1823–1829* (Ku Pa'a Incorporation, Honolulu, HI and The Peabody Museum of Salem, Salem, MA, 1989), 3–4.
- ²⁸ Hiram Bingham to J. J. Evarts, 21 November 1823, ABCFM-Hawai'i Papers, HMCS; "Journal of the Sandwich Islands Mission, 1821–1825," 10 November 1823, photocopy of handwritten journal, ABCFM-Hawai'i Papers, HMCS.
- ²⁹ King, ed., *Reynolds*, 4.
- ³⁰ Rose, "Log," 9 November 1823, NMM; Bingham to Evarts, 21 November 1823, HMCS.
- ³¹ William Ellis notes, 20 November 1823, CWM/LMS/South Seas/Incoming Correspondence 1823–1825/Box 4 Folder 3, School of Oriental and African Studies, Univ. of London (hereafter SOAS).
- ³² *Missionary Records*, 220.
- ³³ Ellis, Letter No. 8, HMCS; Bingham to Evarts, 21 November 1823, HMCS.
- ³⁴ Bingham to Evarts, 21 November 1823, HMCS.
- ³⁵ Ellis notes, 20 November 1823, SOAS.
- ³⁶ Ellis notes, 20 November 1823, SOAS; Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-*

One Year in the Sandwich Islands; or the Civil, Religious and Political History of those Islands, 3rd. ed. rev. (Canandaigua, NY: H. D. Goodwin, Auctioneer, 1855), 202–203.

- ³⁷ Ellis, Letter No. 8, HMCS.
- ³⁸ Rose, “Log,” 11 November 1823, NMM. Rose dates this entry November 11, placing it two days after the ship’s arrival at Lahaina. Other sources, however, date *L’Aigle’s* arrival at Lahaina as November 12, which means that Rose’s November 11 entry should be dated November 14. .
- ³⁹ Rose, “Log,” 15 November 1823, NMM.
- ⁴⁰ Rose, “Log,” 15 November 1823, NMM, where the actual date is 18 November; Bingham to Evarts, 21 November 1823, HMCS.
- ⁴¹ Ellis, Letter No. 8, HMCS; “Sketches of Society: Greenwich Hospital,” *The Literary Gazette, and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c.* (London), no. 389 (3 July 1824): 430. The author of the *Literary Gazette* article is unknown. However, the official ship’s log would have been available for public inspection for a period of time after arrival, and it may be that a journal writer used the official log (which no longer exists) to create an article. Enough details from “Sketches” cross-check with other accounts to lend the “Sketches” account validity.
- ⁴² Bingham to Evarts, 21 November 1823, HMCS; Rose, “Log,” 17 November 1823, NMM; “Starbuck,” *Times* (London), 14 July 1825: 3; “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁴³ John Boulcott, Jr. to Frederick G. Byng, 4 August 1824, British National Archives, FO 58/3, 85–86 (hereafter BNA).
- ⁴⁴ Chamberlain, *Journal*, 20–21 November 1823, HMCS; M. Loomis, *Journal*, 20 November 1823, HMCS.
- ⁴⁵ Bingham to Evarts, 21 November 1823, HMCS; Ellis, Letter No. 8, HMCS.
- ⁴⁶ Hammatt, ed. Wagner-Wright, *Ships, Furs, and Sandalwood*, 33–34.
- ⁴⁷ Bingham, *Residence*, 203.
- ⁴⁸ “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁴⁹ Chamberlain, *Journal*, 23 November 1823, HMCS.
- ⁵⁰ Chamberlain, *Journal*, 27 November 1823, HMCS; M. Loomis, *Journal*, 27 November 1823, HMCS.
- ⁵¹ “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁵² King, ed., *Reynolds*, 6; M. Loomis, *Journal*, 27 November 1823, HMCS; *MH* 20/8 (1824): 248.
- ⁵³ “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁵⁴ “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁵⁵ William Ellis, *Polynesian Researches—Hawaii*, new ed. enlarged and improved (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc., 1969), 454.
- ⁵⁶ Bingham, *Residence*, 203.
- ⁵⁷ Bingham, *Residence*, 204; Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, 454.
- ⁵⁸ Rose, “Log,” 28 November 1823, NMM; “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁵⁹ Rose, “Log,” 28 November 1823, NMM; *MH* 20/8 (1824): 248.
- ⁶⁰ Rose, “Log,” 28 November 1823, NMM; “Sketches,” 430; Chamberlain, *Journal*, 27 November 1823, HMCS.

- ⁶¹ Bingham, *Residence*, 204.
- ⁶² Leonce Jore, *L'Océan Pacifique, Au Temps de la Restauration et de la Monarchie de Juillet* (1815–1848), Tome 1 (Paris: Esson et Chantemerle, 1959), 177, note 12.
- ⁶³ Samuel M. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii*, trans. Mary Kawena Pukui (Honolulu: The Kamehameha Schools Press, 1961), 256; “King of the Sandwich Islands, and his suite Now in England June 3, 1824,” Willis Collection, London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA); “Obituary,” *Polynesian* (Honolulu), no. 21, (4 October 1851): 82; “Further relating to the deceased James Young Kanehoa,” *Polynesian* (Honolulu), no. 22 (11 October 1851): 86.
- ⁶⁴ Rose, “Log,” 29 November–10 December 1823, NMM.
- ⁶⁵ Rose, “Log,” 12 December 1823, NMM; Captain the Right No. Byron, *Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde to the Sandwich Island, in the years 1824–1825*, 2 parts, ed. Mary Graham (London: John Murray, 1826), 2: 206.
- ⁶⁶ Located at 5 degrees 37 minutes S, 155 degrees 56 minutes W, the island measures 8.9 km east-to-west and 3.5 km north-to-south. Its highest point measures 5 meters. The island is uninhabited and is one of the eight islands comprising the island nation of Kiribati.
- ⁶⁷ Rose, “Log,” 12 December 1823, NMM.
- ⁶⁸ Rose, “Log,” 12–14 December 1823, NMM. A league is roughly equivalent to 3 miles.
- ⁶⁹ Rose, “Log,” 15 December 1823, NMM; www.janeresture.com/kiribati_line/starbuck.htm, accessed November 10, 2009, for physical descriptions.
- ⁷⁰ Rose, “Log,” 15 December 1823, NMM.
- ⁷¹ Rose, “Log,” 12–15 December 1823, NMM.
- ⁷² Rose, “Log,” 19 December 1823 to 26 January 1824, NMM.
- ⁷³ “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁷⁴ “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁷⁵ Robert C. Schmitt, “Card Playing,” Hawai‘i’s History Moments, The Hawaiian Historical Society; Sybil Moseley Bingham, *Journal on Board the Thaddeus and First Years in the Islands, 1819–1823*, 2 vols., 1: 4 March 1822, The Journal Collection, HMCS.
- ⁷⁶ Byron, *Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde*, ed. Graham, 1: 55. Mrs. Graham may have learned this from her informant, the Hon. F. G. Byng.
- ⁷⁷ “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁷⁸ Rose, “Log,” 1–17 February 1824, NMM.
- ⁷⁹ “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁸⁰ “Starbuck,” *Times* (London), 14 July 1825: 3; Jones, *Ships*, 3: 552.
- ⁸¹ Rose, “Log,” 17 February 1824, NMM.
- ⁸² Adrienne L. Kaeppler, “‘L’Aigle’ and HMS ‘Blonde’: The Use of History in the Study of Ethnography,” *HJH* 11 (1978), 29–30, which discusses the feather gifts.
- ⁸³ “Sketches,” 430; Byron, *Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde*, ed. Graham, 1: 55–56.
- ⁸⁴ Byron, *Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde*, ed. Graham, 1: 56.
- ⁸⁵ “Sketches,” 430.
- ⁸⁶ “Sketches,” 430.

- ⁸⁷ "Sketches," 430–431.
- ⁸⁸ "Further to J. K. Young," 86; Byron, *Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde*, ed. Graham, 1: 56–57.
- ⁸⁹ Rose, "Log," 24 February – 7 March 1824, NMM.
- ⁹⁰ Gov. Kekuanāoa to Samuel Castle, 7 October 1840, archival translation into English from Hawaiian, F. O. & Ex. 402-6-137, AH.
- ⁹¹ "Further to J. K. Young," 86.
- ⁹² "Further to J. K. Young," 86.
- ⁹³ Byron, *Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde*, ed. Graham, 1: 56. Graham identifies Byng as her informant for the suite's London activities, and the British list written in Rio includes Young's name as a member of the suite and notes that he speaks English ("King of the Sandwich Islands," LMA). Byng naturally would have asked where Young was. Without Young, Rives and Starbuck were the only two of the party who could speak English, and they surely would have given Byng their own version of events. "King of the Sandwich Islands," LMA.
- ⁹⁴ "Sketches," 429.
- ⁹⁵ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, trans. Pukui, 257, and fn † at 257. Kamakau's original publication date is 15 February 1868.
- ⁹⁶ Rose, "Log," 7 March 1824, NMM.
- ⁹⁷ George Eyre to J. W. Croker, 5 March 1824, BNA, FO 58/3, 24.
- ⁹⁸ Condé Raguet to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, 8 March 1824, National Archives Microfilm Record Group 59, Microcopy No. T-172, Roll No. 2, AH.
- ⁹⁹ Rose, "Log," 8–15 March 1824, NMM; "Sketches," 431.
- ¹⁰⁰ Rose, "Log," 17–30 March 1824, NMM.
- ¹⁰¹ Rose, "Log," 14 April 1824, NMM.
- ¹⁰² Rose, "Log," 1–9 May 1824, NMM.
- ¹⁰³ Rose, "Log," 11 May 1824, NMM.
- ¹⁰⁴ Iolani [Kamehameha II] to Paalua [Kalanimoku], Ka'akumu [Ka'ahumanu] and my younger brother, *Kamahoemuwa* 1824, translation from Hawaiian into English by Alexander Liholiho, Kamehameha IV, F.O. & Ex. 402-2-14, AH. This is the only letter that Liholiho wrote home to his chiefs during his journey.
- ¹⁰⁵ "Sketches," 431.
- ¹⁰⁶ "Addenda to the account of the Sandwich Islanders," *The Literary Gazette, and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c.* (London), no. 390 (10 July 1824): 445.
- ¹⁰⁷ Rose, "Log," 13 May 1824, NMM.
- ¹⁰⁸ Rose, "Log," 16–17 May 1824, NMM.
- ¹⁰⁹ "Sketches," 431.
- ¹¹⁰ Rose, "Log," 17 May 1824, NMM; *Bell's Life in London*, 23 May 1824: 3; Byron, *Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde*, ed. Graham, 1: 58.
- ¹¹¹ Iolani [Kamehameha] to Paalua [Kalanimoku], et al., *Kamahoemuwa* 1824, F.O. & Ex. 402-2-14, AH. Note Liholiho uses May 18, 1824 as the date of arrival at Portsmouth, but it was May 17, 1824. *Courier* (London), 18 May 1824: 4 confirms Rose's date.
- ¹¹² Rose, "Log," 19 May 1824, NMM.

- ¹¹³ Rose, "Log," 19–24 May 1824, NMM; Byron, *Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde*, ed. Graham, 1: 58, 64.
- ¹¹⁴ "Starbuck," *Times* (London), 12 July 1825: 3. Kamakau alleges that no one in England knew who Liholiho was until J. K. Young, who Kamakau claims carried all of the party's letters of introduction, arrived several weeks later by another ship. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 257. Liholiho's own letter home from London disputes this claim, for he tells his regents and his brother that on the fourth day after their arrival at Portsmouth, the King of England sent his representative to take care of them, AH, F. O. & Ex. 402-2-14. Furthermore, British FO documentation reveals that the Admiralty knew by 18 May that the King of the Sandwich Islands had arrived to see King George, J. W. Croker [Admiralty] to Earl Bathurst [Colonies Secretary], 18 May 1824, BNA, FO 115/82, No. 1, Inclosures 1 and 2.
- ¹¹⁵ Frederick Byng to J. Planta, 12 November 1824, BNA, FO 58/3, 148–149. Planta was an Under Secretary in the Foreign Office.
- ¹¹⁶ Foreign Office Secretary George Canning to the Treasury, 28 May 1824, BNA, FO 58/3, 28–29.
- ¹¹⁷ Byron, *Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde*, ed. Graham, 2: 86.
- ¹¹⁸ Kauluhaimalama died shortly before *L'Aigle* reached England. See fns 103 and 104.
- ¹¹⁹ Memorandum, 3 August 1824, BNA, FO 58/3, 83–84. This Memorandum from the Foreign Office files lacks signatures but memorializes the joint deposit of Liholiho's funds by F. G. Byng and J. Boulcott into the firm of Prescott, Grote and Prescott.
- ¹²⁰ Iolani [Kamehameha II] to Paalua [Kalanimoku], et al., *Kamahoemuwa* 1824, F.O. & Ex. 402-2-14, AH.
- ¹²¹ Boulcott to Byng, 4 August 1824, BNA, FO 58/3, 85–86.
- ¹²² Valentine Starbuck to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 31 July 1824, BNA, FO 58/3, 56–58.
- ¹²³ Valentine Starbuck to George Canning, 8 October 1824, BNA, FO 58/3, 136–138.
- ¹²⁴ "Starbuck," *Times* (London), 14 July 1825: 3.
- ¹²⁵ Jones, *Ships*, 3: 553. Even his family's genealogical site has no further record of Valentine Starbuck: <http://www.jillsfamilyancestry.com>, accessed November 10, 2009.
- ¹²⁶ At least that is the reason that Rives gave Canning when he requested permission to leave England. Jassint B. Rives [aka John Rives] to Secretary George Canning, 3 August 1824, in French, BNA, FO 58/3, 79–80; "Their Late Sandwich Majesties," *Times* (London), 11 September 1824: 2.
- ¹²⁷ Jassen B. Rives [aka John Rives] to George Canning, 11 October 1824 and 23 October 1824, BNA, FO 58/3, 139–142, 146–147.
- ¹²⁸ Kekuanaoa to Castle, 7 October 1840, F.O. & Ex. 402-6-137, AH.
- ¹²⁹ Although Hunnewell provides the first account of Rives' activities after October 1824, Kuykendall provides the only thoroughly-sourced synopsis. Ralph S.

Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom, Volume I, 1778–1854, Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu: The Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 1938), 138–140; "Further to J. K. Young," 86, clarifies some of Kuykendall's details; James Hunnewell, "The Visit of the Frigate L'Artemise," typed manuscript from *Mercantile Journal*, 14 February 1840, note g, 6, including Father Reginald Yzendorn's remarks on the Hunnewell article.

¹³⁰ Jones, Volume 2, *Ships*, 1: 76, 84, 89–90.

